

# Ploughshare August/September 1996

(scanned version from the original)

## From the Rector

I write during a Wimbledon quarter final and wonder of wonders, Tim Henman, an Englishman, is in it. Euro '96 seems to have been a huge success and our players, administrators, broadcasters and amazingly our fans have done us proud. If only someone could devise something fairer than the lottery of a penalty shoot-out.

Our cricketers are one up against India. Our athletes will soon be bound for the Atlanta Olympics and there must be some medals in store, surely!

As a nation, we have been starved of success for too long. We invented so many marvellous games and now the rest of the world has learned to play them better than we can. It's hard to take!

When at last we do well, the whole nation seems to enjoy that feel-good factor.

I have as keen an interest in sport as anyone I know. I would love to be on extended holiday this summer, glued to the TV with occasional visits for live watching. I have to admit that my enjoyment is enhanced greatly when England and the English are winning.

It worries me that the feel-good factor isn't very evident at St Thomas'. God has given us such lovely people, such variety of worship and activity and such opportunities to serve Him -and He has assured us that we're winning! We need to learn to enjoy His goodness and have our confidence renewed and spirits refreshed.

Sporting success doesn't last. Herman is losing and it is pouring with rain at Wimbledon as I close. But confidence based on Jesus Christ is permanent.

**Christopher Frith**

## Meditive Prayer Group

The meditative prayer group has been meeting weekly now since the beginning of the year. We are a very mixed bunch of prayers -some have meditated for many years but for some, this is the first experience.

Each meeting is different and therefore fresh. Sometimes we use a passage of scripture to start our discussion, or we listen to a tape, or one member will share some music, a prayer, or some writing that has been especially meaningful to them on their spiritual journey. Then we have a time of silent meditation. One of our members describes this as:

*"A time of surrender to God" and "A time of sharing and waiting on God together. In the stillness and quiet we are aware of much. It is a chance to listen and to release our feelings to God, relax in Him and to receive His peace."*

Another member speaks of:

*... the great grace that all of us have been given -to believe in the presence of Jesus Christ in our hearts and to believe that he invites each of us into that presence."*

Another time of sharing and caring follows and often this is a very special time because the group experience of opening to God always seems to draw us closer together.

*"Come near to God and He will come near to you" (James 4:8) is very much our experience!*

## Hope for Eastern Europe

### June 1996 Journey to Romania

I want to begin by thanking God for the wonderful answers to prayer which made this journey to Romania possible: especially regarding the paper work for our lorry, two drivers -Ian and David, the wonderful range of medical supplies and equipment that were given.

A very big thank you too, in the name of Jesus. to everyone who supported this very challenging but rewarding journey to the Orthopaedic hospital in Constanta. Dr Nicolai sends his grateful thanks, especially for the prosthesis which were a true answer to prayer. He still urgently needs up to date medical books on orthopaedic surgical techniques, tools for surgery and orthopaedic equipment. He is praying that God will make it possible for him to visit England in September to share his needs and that suitable venues will be found.

Dr Nicolae has kindly invited members of our team to work at the hospital this summer, a marvellous opportunity to experience first hand what conditions are really like and reach to the needs of staff and patients in a positive caring way.

The new feeding centre at Basarabi church run by Ana and her team is due to open in the very near future, thanks to your positive response to their urgent appeal two weeks before our departure. Fifty new enamel mugs, plates /dishes, dessert spoons and teaspoons were transported along with food and vitamins.

They are planning to feed and support fifty very poor children from the surrounding area for 2 - 3 days each week and share with them the love of Jesus. Ana has particularly asked for tinned and packet food, plus concentrated fruit drink, preferably in powdered form, for the August trip. If you feel you would like to get a few friends together and start to collect food to feed these little lambs, I'm sure you will receive a true blessing.

Children's activity supplies were also taken to help Vali and Julia with their mission outreach work amongst the children from very poor regions. New bags, writing books, felt tips, coloured pencils, crayons and pencil cases were provided. The money was raised by our friends in Matlock who plan to support the Children of Romania. Margaret Leighton and her team are at present collecting supplies and preparing shoe boxes for six hundred children at Christmas time. Jill is also supporting her vision by reaching out to schools and groups in that area. We really thank God for their dedication and love.

Another exciting appeal has just been launched by our dear friends Marian and David Smith for the children's bible literature, which we are planning to deliver in August to 400 children in the same region. Thank you Lord for your living word. Arrangements were made for us to visit Tansa's home which is nearing completion. A small amount of money is still needed to complete the joinery work and connect the water supply -but Tansa has moved in and we are planning to deliver supplies to help her furnish the new safe house this summer. She sends her love and very grateful thanks to everyone who has supported this wonderful project. Small items of furniture, kitchen supplies and floor covering would be greatly appreciated.

Our next journey is planned for August.

Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

God bless you all,

**Pamela Gratton**

### Link Mission Partners Andy and Mandy Lines

It hardly seems a year since Andrew, Mandy and their family returned to Paraguay, and from reading their letters they appear to have settled into life in South America once again. We are happy to hear that Andrew's teaching courses are going well, and they have made links with the congregation in Conception. However, midway through their term they must be missing their close families at home, and prayer for them with this in mind would be much appreciated.

**Dorothy and Richard Banks**

## Quest Club

**A very big thank you** to everyone who has supported Quest Club's project to help the work of **Novimost International**. Extracts from a letter from Paul Brooks the director of Novimost read as follows:

"Thank you very much indeed for sending the kind donation of £250 from the children of St Thomas' Quest Club. Your support is greatly valued particularly at this time of transition from war to peace in Bosnia. We are finding that there are increasing demands upon our resources and greater opportunities for taking Good News to the Bosnian people now, but also a drop in our income, due to the disappearance of Bosnia from the headlines in the newspapers and broadcast media.

An exciting building project in East Mostar is currently under construction. I believe this venture will, in time affect the whole of Bosnia, by supplying a new brand of trained and highly motivated Christian workers for mission and compassion ministry throughout the country.

Please convey our appreciation to all the children and adults involved in making the gift."

## Book Review

**"Miracle in Mostar"** by Gerard Kelly and Lowell Sheppard.

"In 1993, 150,000 people were desperate to escape from the "hell" of the burning Bosnian city of Mostar" One young couple decided to buck the trend. Risking all, they moved to Mostar and started a revolution of love. Buy the book (£4.99 through St Thomas' bookstall). Read the book, and be prepared to be challenged yourself!

## Off to Scarborough

The Church Family Weekend will be held at **Green Gables Hotel**. Scarborough over the weekend **27 to 29 September 1996**. Jonathan Jee, our former Curate, is coming to lead our thoughts and he plans to base his contributions on the parable of the prodigal son. Alan Lowe, who has been on placement in our parish during July and August while training with the Church Army is to lead the children's programme.

(Read about the weekend in the December 1996 edition of the magazine)

## Kath Steer introduces a series of nature studies to interpret biblical concepts.

### The Butterfly

**Theme** : *"I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life of the world to come".*

Seeking to comprehend the above statement from the Creed, we read from I Corinthians 15 v 12-19 and 35 -38

What a tremendous passage of Scripture! Our minds boggle at such statements as:

*Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For just as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive: each to be sure in his turn: Christ first, then His own at His coming.*" (v 20 and 22-23)

Such words as these give rise to questions: WHO? HOW? WHEN? WHAT? We consider:

#### 1. WHO?

Answering the question *"Who gives a body to the seed?"* (v 35), one immediately thinks of flowers and fruit, to which we answer *"Well. God of course!"*

Changing our way of thinking, we turn from vegetation to think upon the 'seed' of the butterfly, the life cycle of the caterpillar being an up to date parable.

Recalling that God is its maker, we observe that from the day of its birth the caterpillar has butterfly life within itself. Being an avid eater, it devours everything within reach and then finally has to give in because its skin has become too tight -this is known as the moult. It emerges much finer than it was before, but it has passed through a crisis. This process of feeding and moulting is repeated at least four times, and each time it becomes more fine, for the health and beauty of the caterpillar will appear in the butterfly. We are reminded here of Charles Wesley's words "*Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place*" quoting Paul's letter to Corinthians. Peter explains that the crises of our Christian lives will bring us forth as gold -kept by the power of God. (1 Peter 1 v 5-8). The parable here is quite clear, the moment we are re-born from above, we must begin to feed on Christ through his word and in prayer, praise and worship.

## 2.HOW?

Comparing what is sown to what is raised I refer to my previous statement, that every caterpillar has butterfly life within itself. We see a caterpillar attaching itself to a leaf or a twig and we exclaim "*What is it doing?*" It is simply making a ladder on which to crawl or rest, as silk emerges from its jaws (spinnerets). This is the evidence that 'butterfly wing' is at work within that little 'mortal' grub. In like manner, every believer born again from above receives eternal life now, for this begins as soon as Christ has planted **new life** within. This in no way implies that we shall never shed this mortal body, for if Jesus still waits we shall all go the way of all flesh. But if He comes "*We shall all be changed -in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*". (1 Corinthians 15v 52.)

## 3.WHEN?

Look again -what is that caterpillar doing now? Hanging from a twig by a silk thread, it twists and turns as it prepares the cocoon for its chrysalis stage, where rest gives way to glory.

We must note that at no time whatever is that little creature within its cocoon dead. It liquidises and loses its original form and the new then begins to take shape. Quoting Paul "*So also is the resurrection of the dead, it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.*

But at what time will that 'New Creature' within that cocoon, emerge? In other words when? -At the Appointed Time. I prefer to name it 'Reveille' or the Morning Call. There is an appointed time in the Lord's plan when His people will emerge from their state of 'sleep' which does not mean 'slumber' but "*with the Lord in Paradise*" (Corinthians 2v 8) So, the dead in Christ will be raised first, afterward, we who are alive and remain.

So, When? -We await the Reveille!

## 4. WHAT?

Watching that chrysalis again, we suddenly see parts of the body of an insect appear. It emerges, it finds a place in the sun, and having dried its wings it takes its first flight! Can we recognize its former image? Yes we can if we look at the butterfly body for its former image is identifiable. One thing is most certain, it bares the image of the parent who laid the original egg. "*To every seed it's own body*".

As Believers, whose image shall we bear? Why, the image of Him who gave us new birth by His death and resurrection and ascension -The Lord Jesus Christ, of course. As John the Apostle so beautifully writes: "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God: and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*"

What is He like now? Read Revelations Ch 1.

Now, just look at that lovely swallow tail flying freely wheresoever it will- not crawling but flying around; it has a new lifestyle -and we shout glory!

- Its appearance is different -all glorious and beautiful
- Its food is different nectar, not cabbage leaves!
- It's airborne -yes, it's having the time of its life!

Applying this to Believers:

- Their appearance will be different yet recognisable - "we shall know as we are known" -recognition? Well, that's my understanding of it.
- They will feed on Angels' food, and like the butterfly, we will not have to eat to live, but we'll enjoy the new diet.
- Their immortal bodies will move with absolute freedom. *"As we have borne the image of the earthly one, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly one."* 1 Corinthians 15v 49. Read also Revelation ch 7.

We conclude:

***"For our citizenship belongs in heaven, from which also we expect the Lord Jesus Christ as Deliverer who will change the fashion of our humiliated body so that it will resemble his glorious body."*** (Philippians 3v 20-21)

"On that bright and glorious morning  
when the dead in Christ shall rise  
And the glory of His resurrection share,  
When His chosen ones shall gather  
to their home beyond the sties,  
And the roll is called up fonder -I'll be there!"